

REMARKS

With the present paper, claims 1, 5, and 9 have been amended to correct the claims to be consistent with the specification and to more clearly claim the present invention. Claim 10 has been canceled.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 – 10 as being unpatentable over RIDDLE. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Independent claims 1, 5, and 9 are now limited to a video game environment requiring video game terminals. In addition, the independent claims now expressly requiring storage of messages in the intermediate database. In contrast, RIDDLE teaches video teleconferencing. No video game terminals are contemplated. Moreover, RIDDLE's video conferencing system streams data (as opposed to the claimed messaging) and cannot store messages at an intermediate database, due to the real time requirements. Of course, chat (as claimed) has no such requirement.

As noted previously, an intermediate database provided for remote in between storage is not consistent with the purpose of RIDDLE, which is teleconferencing. Real time applications, such as teleconferencing, would not store data streams during a transmission because such storage would delay the transmission and thus lose the desired real time functionality. Claim 1, for example, recites the database area storing chat messages that are sent to and from the video game terminals.

It is further submitted that RIDDLE does not disclose or suggest a chairman's terminal storing setup information for setting an area on the database. The passage relied upon by the Examiner does not pertain to setup information for setting an area on

P23936.A05

a database, at least because RIDDLE has no such database (and in fact could not use such a database).

Nor does RIDDLE disclose or suggest transmitting the setup information from the chairman's terminal to the guest's terminal. Again, the passage relied upon by the Examiner does not pertain to setup information for setting an area on a database.

The claims have also been amended to emphasize the ease of using the present invention. As discussed on page 14, lines 1 – 11, the present invention eliminates the cumbersome operations typically entailed in setting up and joining a chat room. Such cumbersome procedures are particularly problematic when using video game terminals, which have a limited input system. It is believed that transmitting the access request signal and transmitting the invitation signal *solely* in response to the instructions of the chairman/guest is not taught or suggested by the RIDDLE.

Consequently, for at least these reasons it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of the independent claims and provide an indication of their allowability.

Dependent claims 2 - 4 and 6 - 8 are also believed to recite further patentable subject matter of the invention and therefore are also believed allowable over the prior art. As such, allowance of the dependent claims is deemed proper for at least the same reasons noted for the independent claims, in addition to reasons related to their own recitations.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all of the claims in the present application.

P23936.A05

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto. No new matter has been added by the amendments to the claims.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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